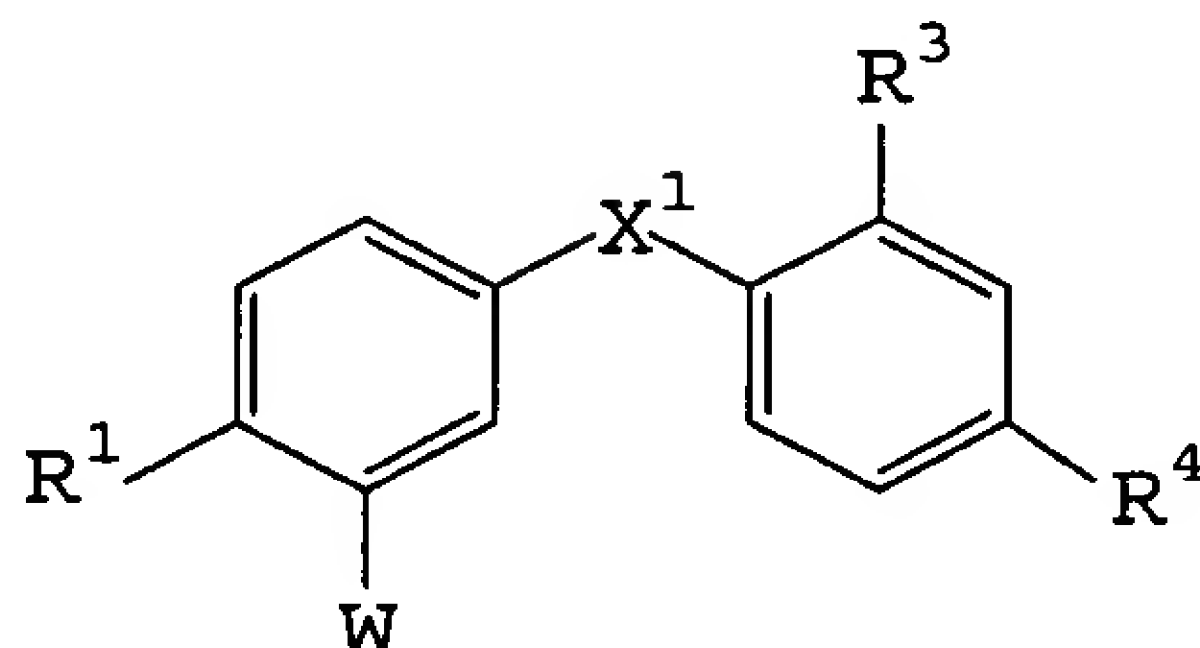


IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein

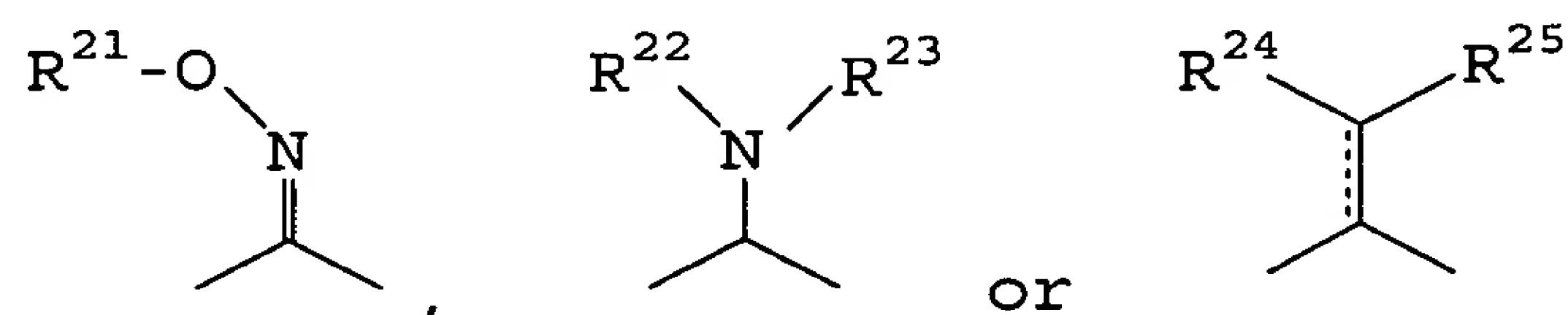
R¹ represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group;

R³ represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group, a carbamoyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group;

R⁴ represents a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl,

alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group;

X^1 represents $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$, $-CH_2-$ or a group of the following formula:



wherein R^{21} represents an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl or heterocycle-lower alkyl group;

R^{22} and R^{23} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, carbamoyl, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl or heterocyclic group; and

R^{24} and R^{25} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; the double line of which one line is a broken line denotes a single bond or a double bond; and

W represents $-Z-COR^{26}$, $-Z-COOR^2$, $-O-CH_2COOR^2$ or $-O-CH_2CH_2COOR^2$, wherein Z represents $-(CH_2)_n-$ in which n represents 0, 1, 2 or 3 with the proviso that when W is $-Z-COOR^2$, n is 2 or 3, $-CH_2CH(CH_3)-$, $-CH=CH-$ or $-CH_2CH=CH-$; R^2 represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; and R^{26} represents $-NHR^{27}$ or $-NHSO_2R^{28}$ in which R^{27} and R^{28} independently represent an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl group;

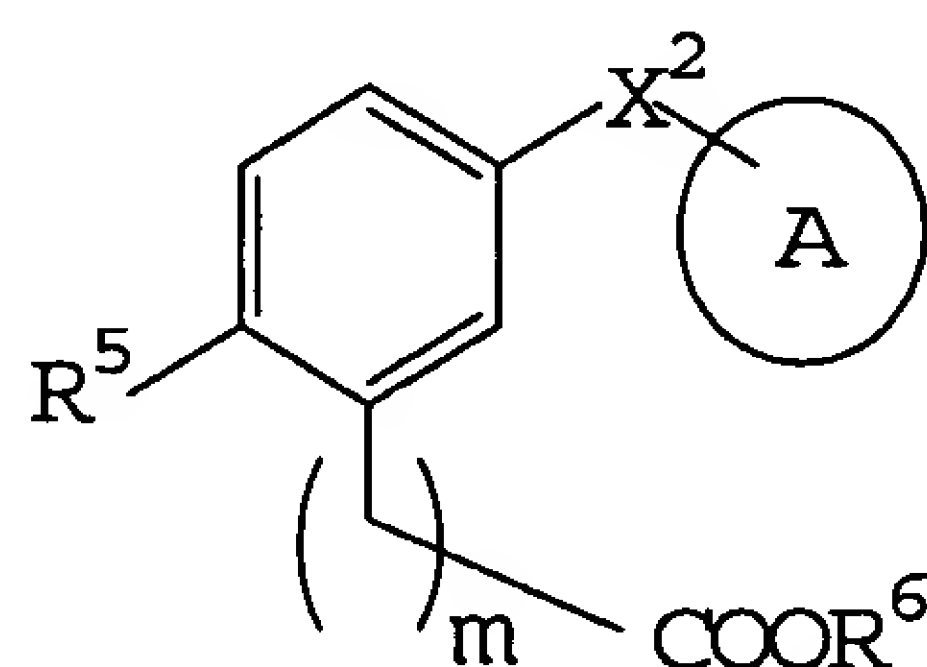
or a salt thereof.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 9, wherein W is $-Z'-COOR^{2'}$, $-Z'-CONH-SO_2R^{28'}$, $-CONH-CH_2COOR^{2'}$ or $-CONH-CH_2CH_2COOR^{2'}$ wherein Z' represents $-(CH_2)_{n'}$ - in which n' is 0, 1 or 2,

with the proviso that when W is $-Z'-COOR^{2'}$, n is 2 or 3, or $-CH=CH-$; $R^{28'}$ represents an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl group; and $R^{2'}$ represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; and X^1 is $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$ or $-CH_2-$.

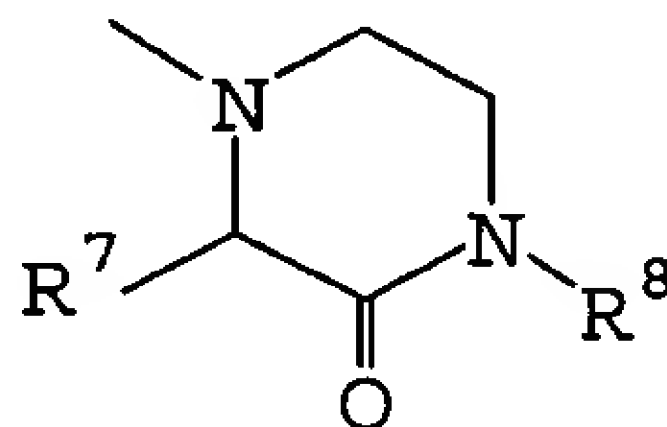
Claim 11 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 10, wherein R^1 is an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; R^3 is an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; and R^4 is an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:

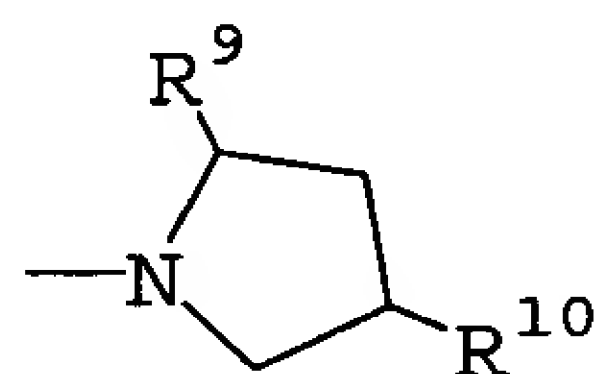


wherein R^5 represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^6 represents a hydrogen atom

or a protecting group for carboxyl group; X^2 represents $-C(O)-$; m represents 0, 1 or 2; and ring A represents a group represented by the following formula:



wherein R^7 represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; and R^8 represents a hydrogen atom, an unprotected or protected amino group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; or a group of the following formula:

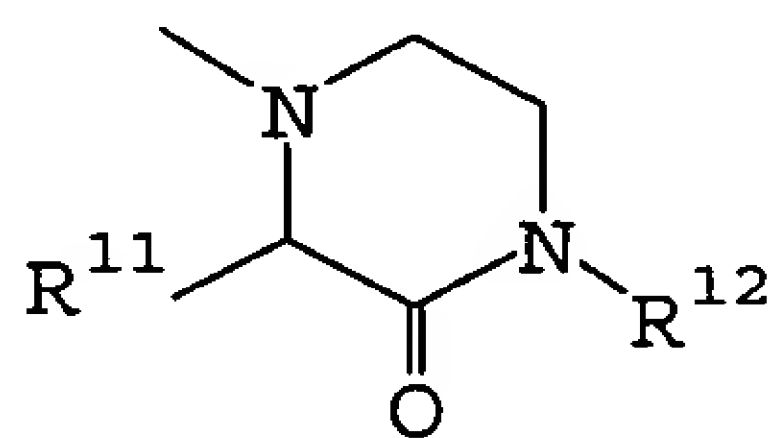


wherein R^9 and R^{10} may be the same or different represent a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl,

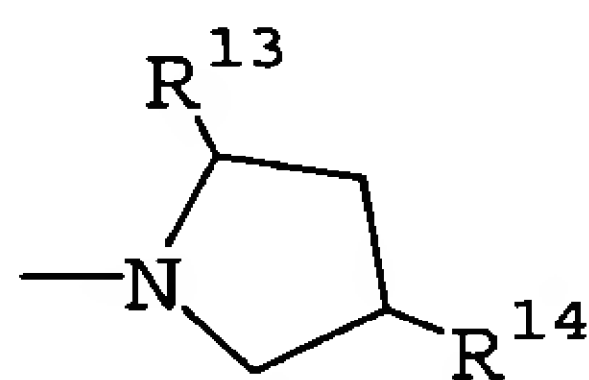
aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino, alkanoyloxy or heterocyclic group;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 12, wherein R^5 is an alkoxy group or an acylamino group; X^2 is $-C(O)-$; and ring A is a group of the following formula:

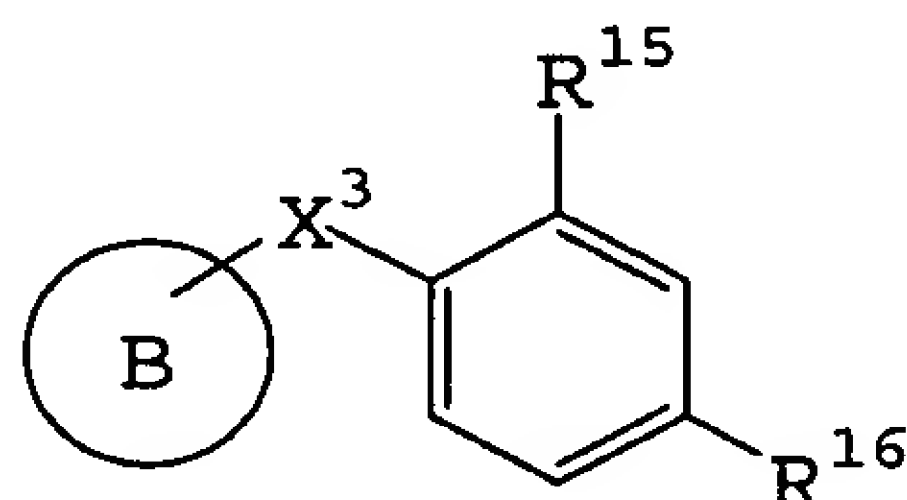


wherein R^{11} is an alkyl or alkoxycarbonyl group; and R^{12} is an alkyl group; or a group of the following formula:



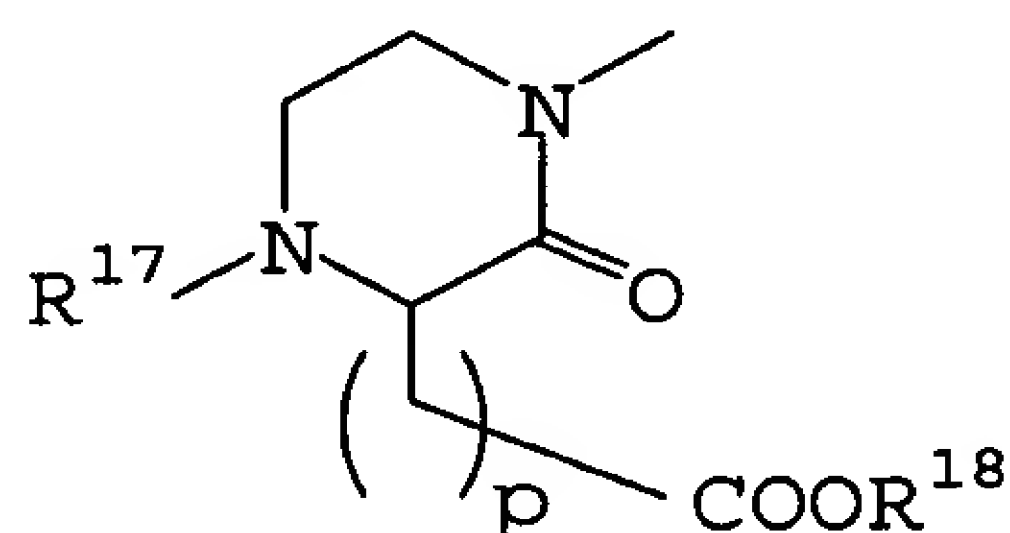
wherein R^{13} is an alkyl or alkoxycarbonyl group; and R^{14} is an alkoxy or alkanoyloxy group.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{15} and R^{16} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an

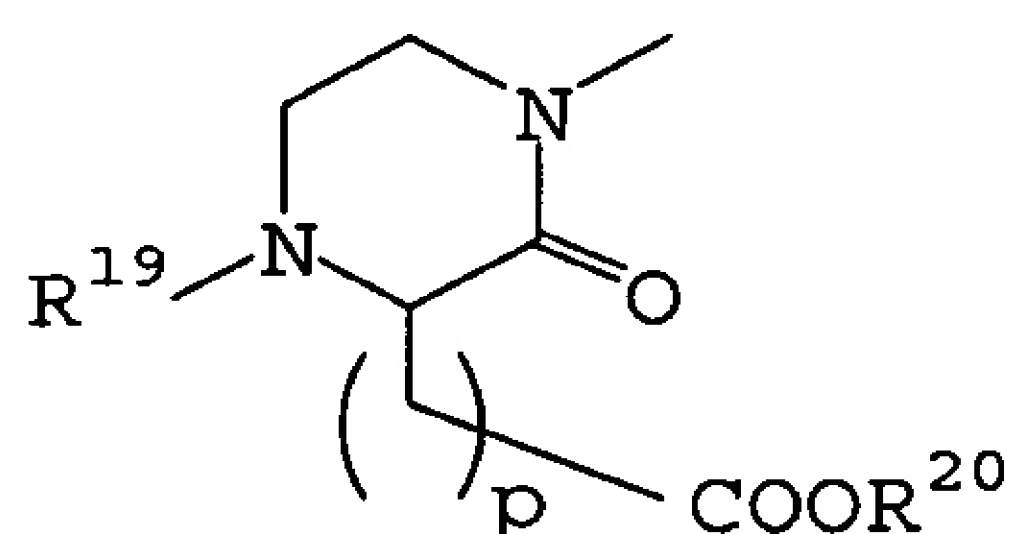
unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^3 represents $-C(O)-$; and ring B represents a group of the following formula:



wherein R^{17} represents a hydrogen atom or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylsulfonyl or heterocyclic group; R^{18} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; and p represents 0, 1 or 2;

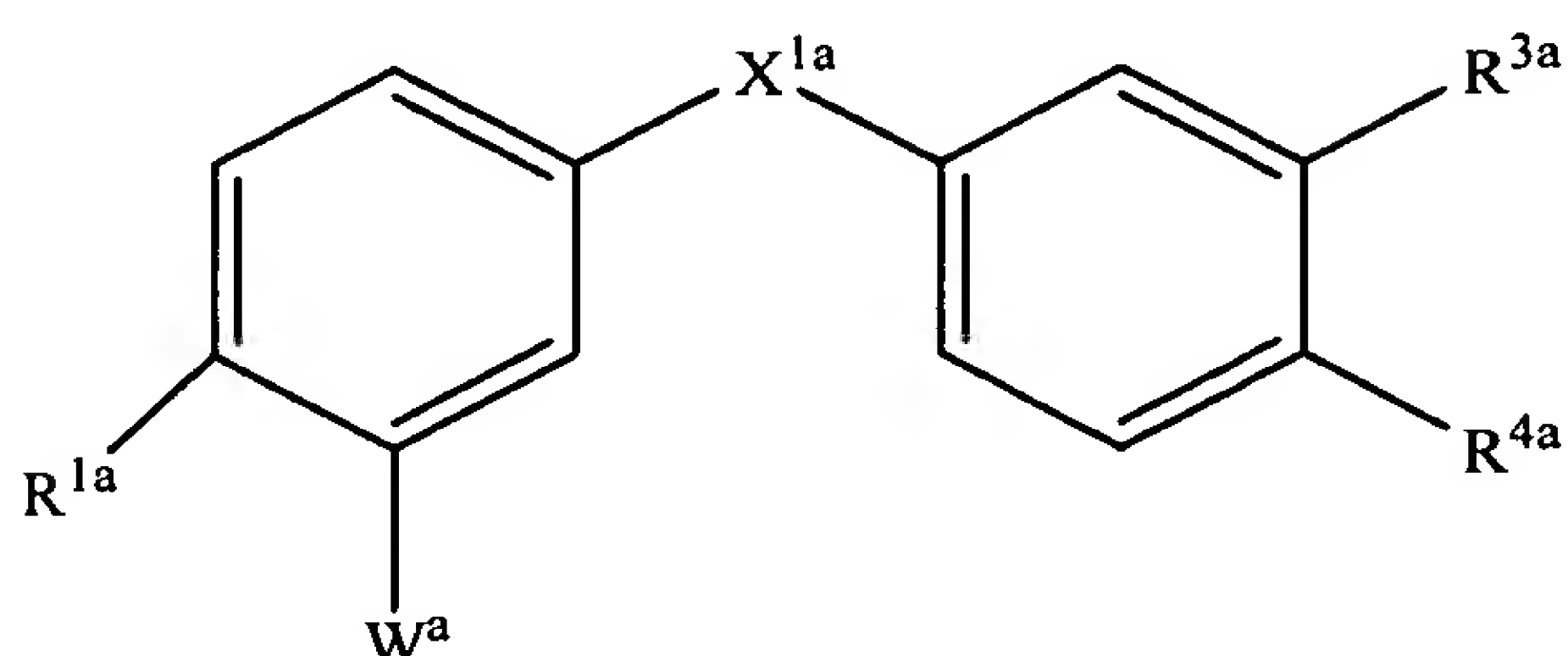
or a salt thereof.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 14, wherein R^{15} and R^{16} may be the same or different represent an alkoxy group; and ring B represents a group of the following formula:

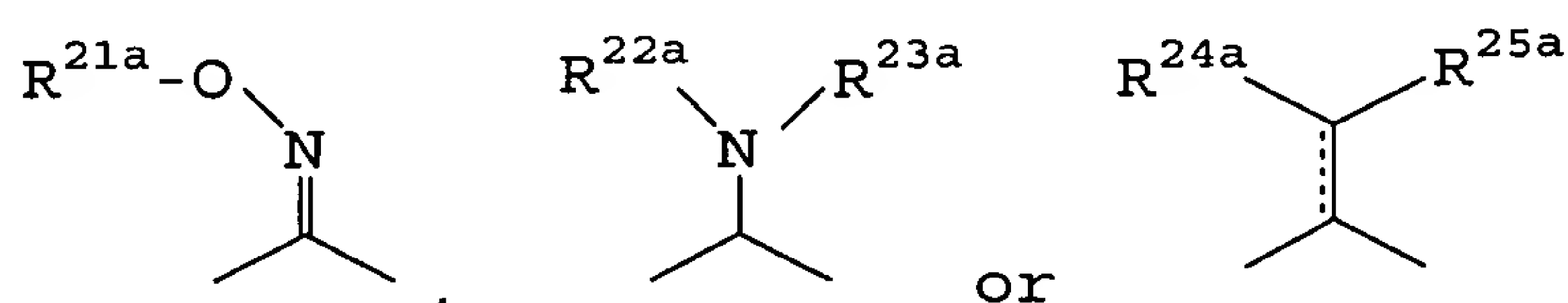


wherein R^{19} is an acyl group; R^{20} is a protecting group for carboxyl group; and p is 0, 1 or 2.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{1a} represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{3a} and R^{4a} , which may be the same or different, each represent a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^{1a} represents $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$, $-CH_2-$ or a group of the following formula:

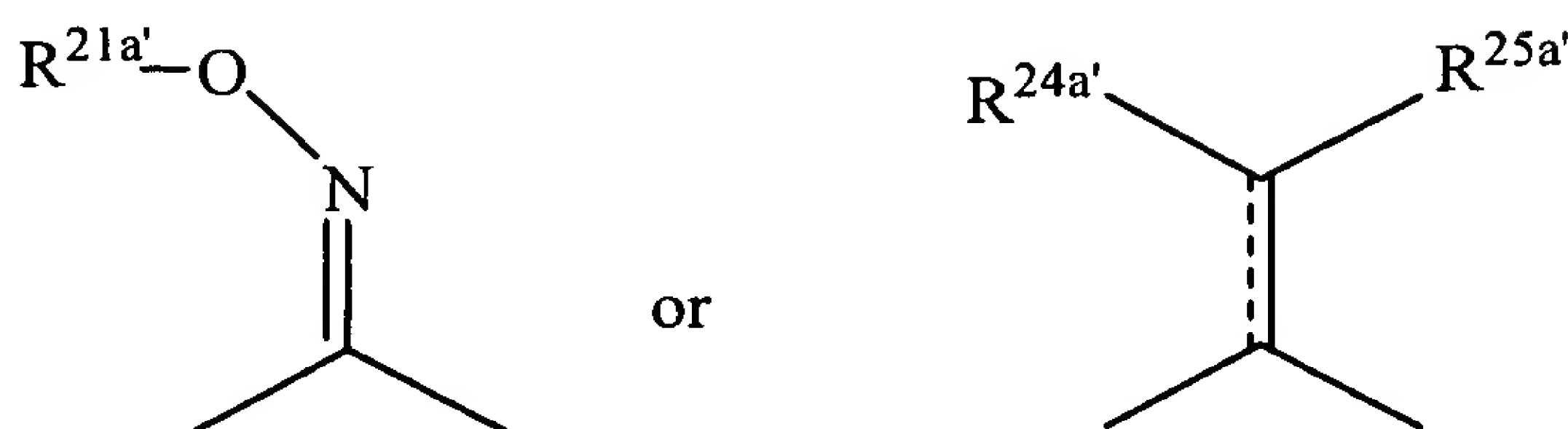


wherein R^{21a} represents an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl or heterocycle-lower alkyl group; R^{22a} and R^{23a} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl,

aralkyl, acyl, carbamoyl, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, arylsulfonyl or heterocyclic group; R^{24a} and R^{25a} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; and the double line of which one line is a broken line represents a single bond or a double bond; and W^a represents $-Z^a-COR^{26a}$, $-Z^a-COOR^{2a}$, $-O-CH_2COOR^{2a}$ or $-O-CH_2CH_2COOR^{2a}$ wherein Z^a represents $-(CH_2)_n^a$, n^a is 0, 1, 2 or 3 with the proviso that when W^a is $-Z^a-COOR^{2a}$, n^a can not be 1, $-CH_2CH(CH_3)-$, $-CH=CH-$ or $-CH_2CH=CH-$; R^{2a} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; and R^{26a} represents $-NHR^{27a}$ or $-NHSO_2R^{28a}$ in which R^{27a} and R^{28a} independently represent an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl group;

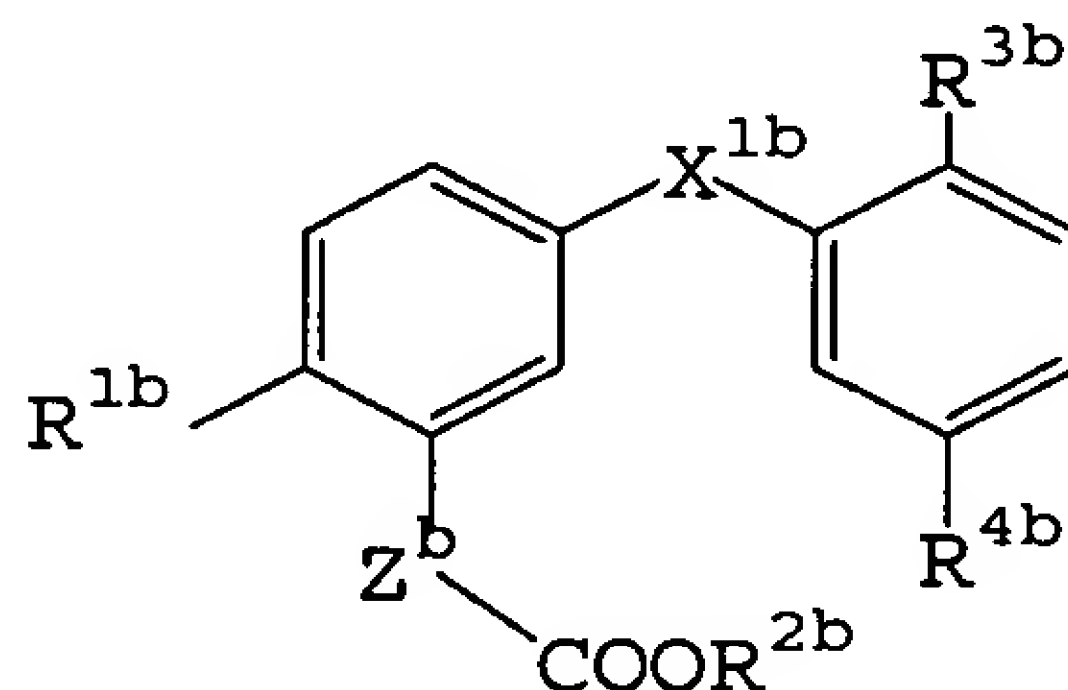
or a salt thereof.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 16, wherein R^{1a} is an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; R^{3a} and R^{4a} may be the same or different and represent an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; X^{1a} is $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$, $-CH_2-$ or a group of the following formula:



wherein R^{21a} represents an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, aralkyl or heterocycle-lower alkyl group; R^{24a} and R^{25a} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxy carbonyl or carbamoyl group; and W^a represents $-Z^a-COR^{26a}$, $-Z^a-COOR^{2a}$, $-O-CH_2COOR^{2a}$, $-O-CH_2CH_2COOR^{2a}$, $-CONH-CH_2COOR^{2a}$, or $-CONH-CH_2CH_2COOR^{2a}$ wherein Z^a represents $-(CH_2)_n$ in which n is 0, 1, 2 or 3 with the proviso that when W^a is $-Z^a-COOR^{2a}$, n is 2 or 3, $-CH_2CH(CH_3)-$, $-CH=CH-$ or $-CH_2CH=CH-$; R^{2a} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; and R^{26a} represents $-NHSO_2R^{28a}$ in which R^{28a} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl group.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



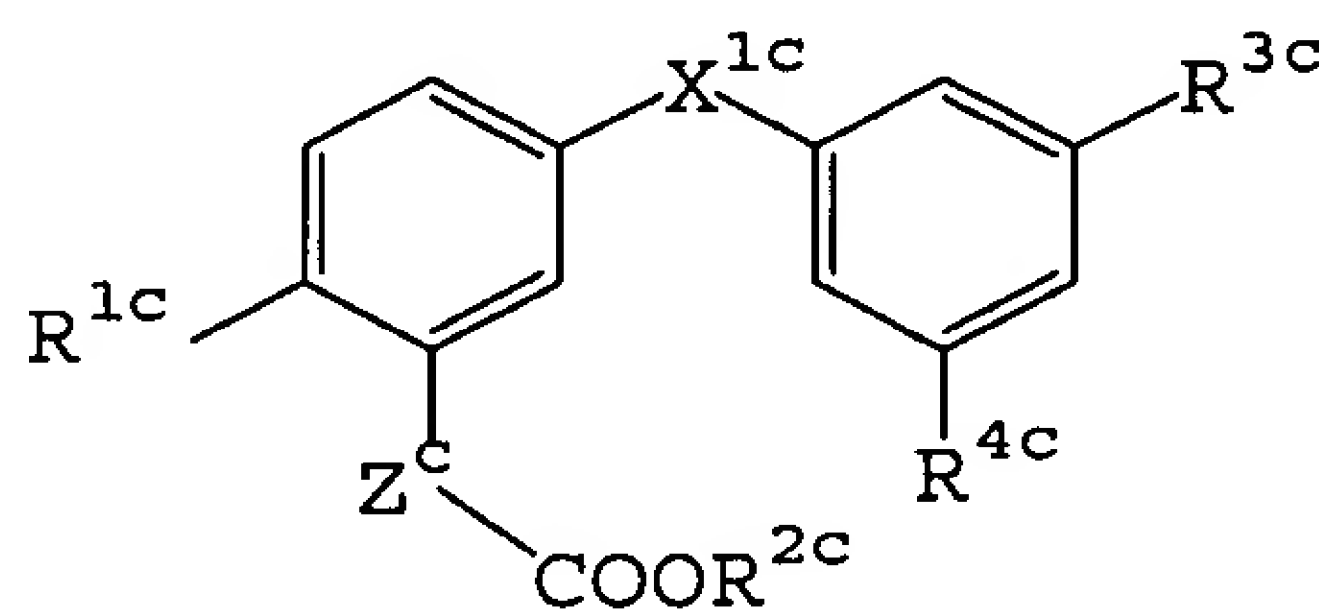
wherein R^{1b} represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl,

alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{2b} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3b} and R^{4b} may be the same or different represent a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^{1b} represents $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and Z^b represents $-(CH_2)_n-$, wherein n^b represents 2 or 3 or $-CH=CH-$;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 18, wherein R^{1b} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; R^{3b} and R^{4b} may be the same or different represent an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; X^{1b} is $-C(O)-$; and Z^b is $-(CH_2)_2-$ or $-(CH_2)_3-$.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



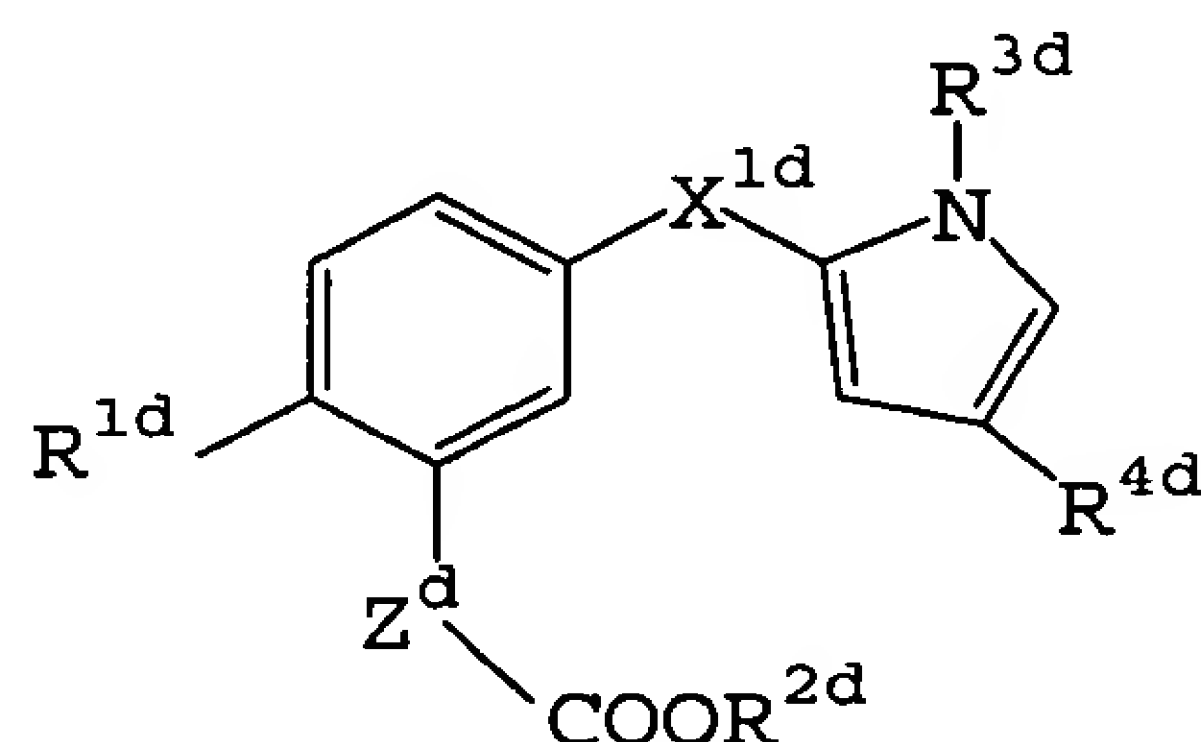
wherein R^{1c} represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an

unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{2c} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3c} and R^{4c} may be the same or different represent a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^{1c} represents $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and Z^c represents $-(CH_2)_{n^c}-$, wherein n^c represents 2 or 3 or $-CH=CH-$;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 20, wherein R^{1c} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; R^{2c} is a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3c} and R^{4c} may be the same or different represent an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; X^{1c} represents $-C(O)-$; and Z^c represents $-(CH_2)_2-$ or $-(CH_2)_3-$.

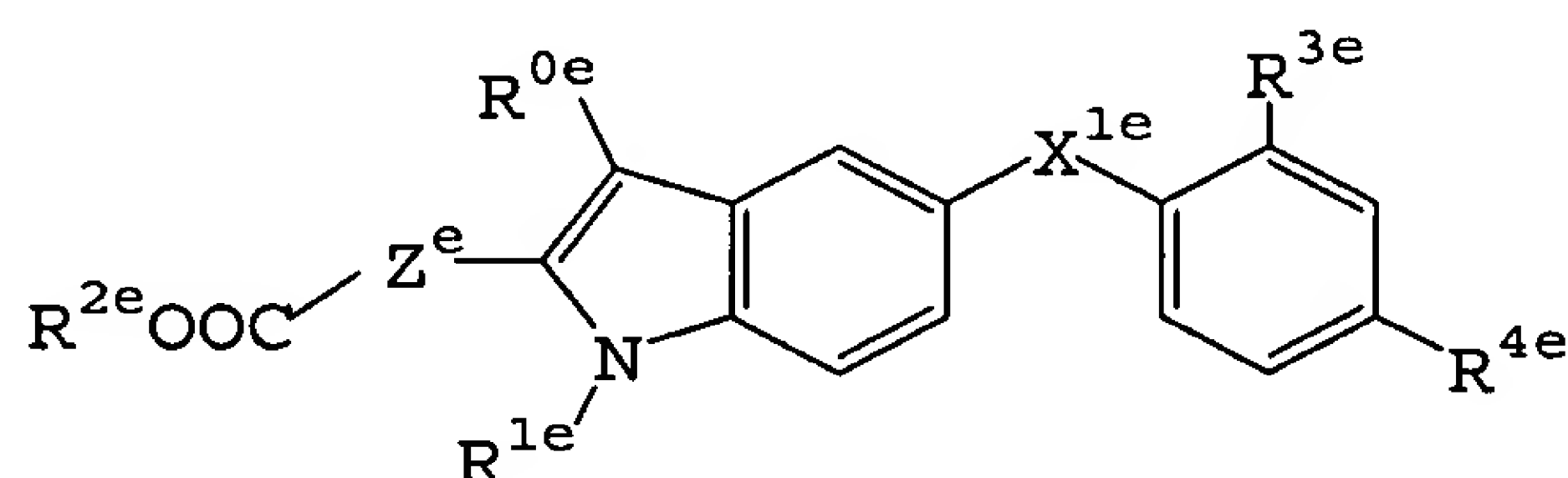
Claim 22 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{1d} represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{2d} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3d} represents a hydrogen atom or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl group; R^{4d} represents a halogen atom, a nitro group, an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylsulfonylamino or arylsulfonylamino group; X^{1d} represents $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and Z^d represents $-(CH_2)_{nd}$ - (nd represents 0, 1 or 2) or $-CH=CH-$; or a salt thereof.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 22, wherein R^{1d} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; R^{3d} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl group; R^{4d} is an unsubstituted or substituted acyl group; X^{1d} is $-C(O)-$; and Z^d is $-(CH_2)_2-$.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



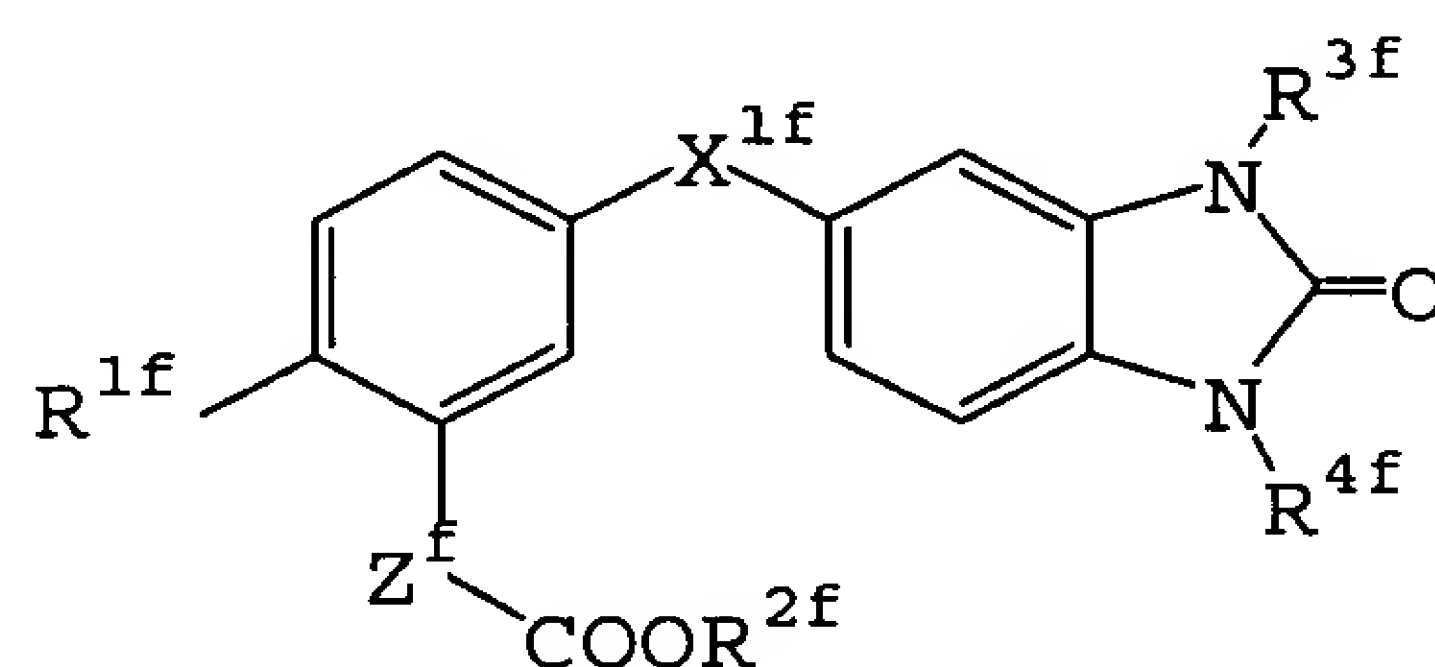
wherein R^{0e} represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a nitro group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl,

alkylsulfonylamino or arylsulfonylamino group; R^{1e} represents an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl or alkylsulfonyl group; R^{2e} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3e} and R^{4e} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^{1e} represents $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and Z^e represents $-(CH_2)_{ne}-$ (ne represents 0, 1 or 2) or $-CH=CH-$;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 24, wherein R^{0e} is a hydrogen atom or a halogen atom; R^{1e} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl group; R^{3e} and R^{4e} independently represent an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; X^{1e} is $-C(O)-$; and Z^e is a bonding unit.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



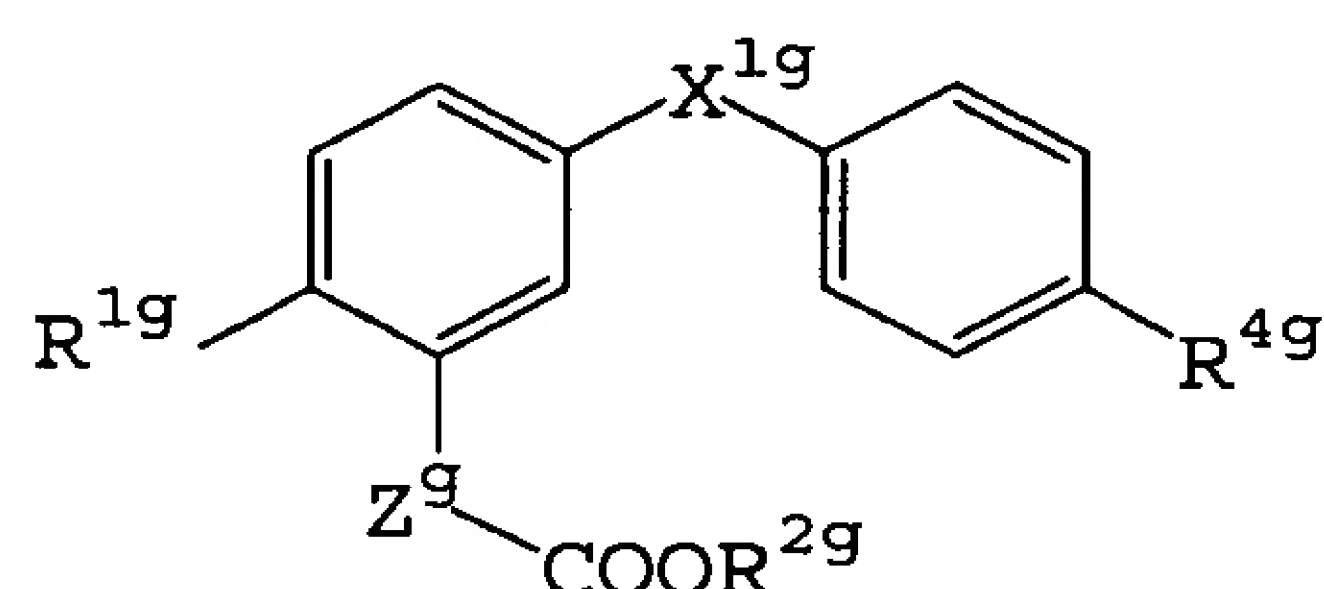
wherein R^{1f} represents a halogen atom, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, alkylamino, acylamino,

alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{2f} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3f} and R^{4f} may be the same or different represent a hydrogen atom or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl group; X^{1f} represents -C(O)-, -CH(OH)- or -CH₂-; and Z^f represents -(CH₂)_{nf}- (nf represents 1 or 2) or -CH=CH-;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn) A benzene derivative or a salt thereof according to Claim 26, wherein R^{1f} is an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; R^{3f} and R^{4f} independently represent an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl group; X^{1f} is -C(O)-; and Z^f is -CH₂-.

Claim 28. (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{1g} and R^{4g} may be the same or different represent an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; X^{1g} is -C(O)-, -CH(OH)- or -CH₂-; Z^g is -(CH₂)_{n^g}-, wherein n^g represents 2 or 3; and R^{2g} is a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented) A compound or a salt thereof according to Claim 9, wherein said compound is a compound that has an activity of antagonistically inhibiting the combination between AP-1 and a recognition sequence thereof.

Claim 30 (Canceled)

Claim 31 (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting AP-1 which comprises ~~administering~~ contacting a compound or a salt thereof according to Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 9 with an AP-1 binding site.

Claim 32-34 (Canceled)

Claim 35 (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The compound or a salt thereof according to Claim 9, ~~wherein said compound is a compound that has an activity of~~ which antagonistically ~~inhibits~~ inhibiting the combination between AP-1 and a recognition sequence thereof.

Claim 36 (Canceled).

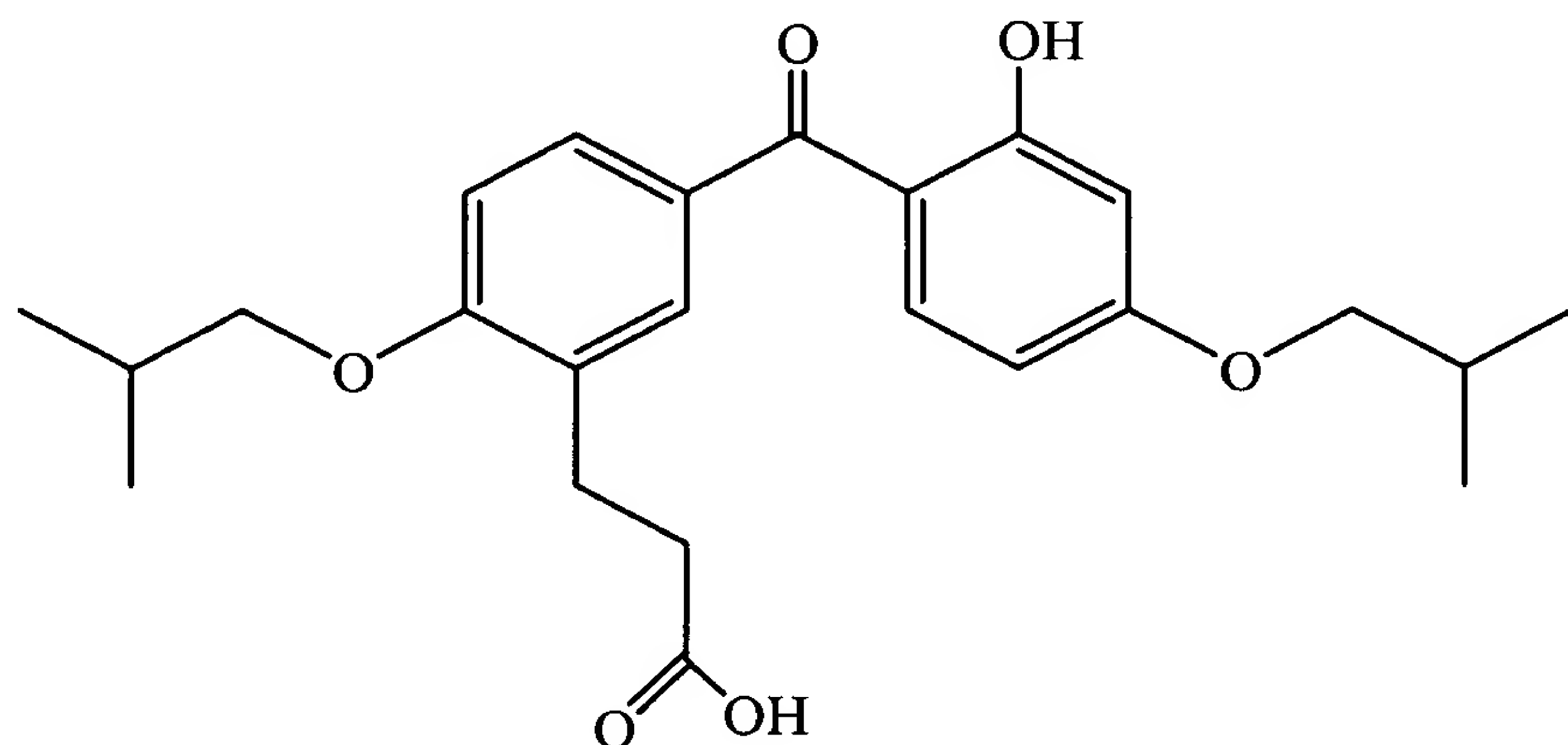
Claim 37 (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting AP-1 which comprises administering ~~[[a]]~~ an effective amount of the compound or a salt thereof according to Claim ~~9~~ to a subject in need thereof.

Claim 38 (Canceled)

Claim 39. (Previously Presented) An agent for treating an autoimmune disease, which comprises a compound or a salt thereof according to Claim 9.

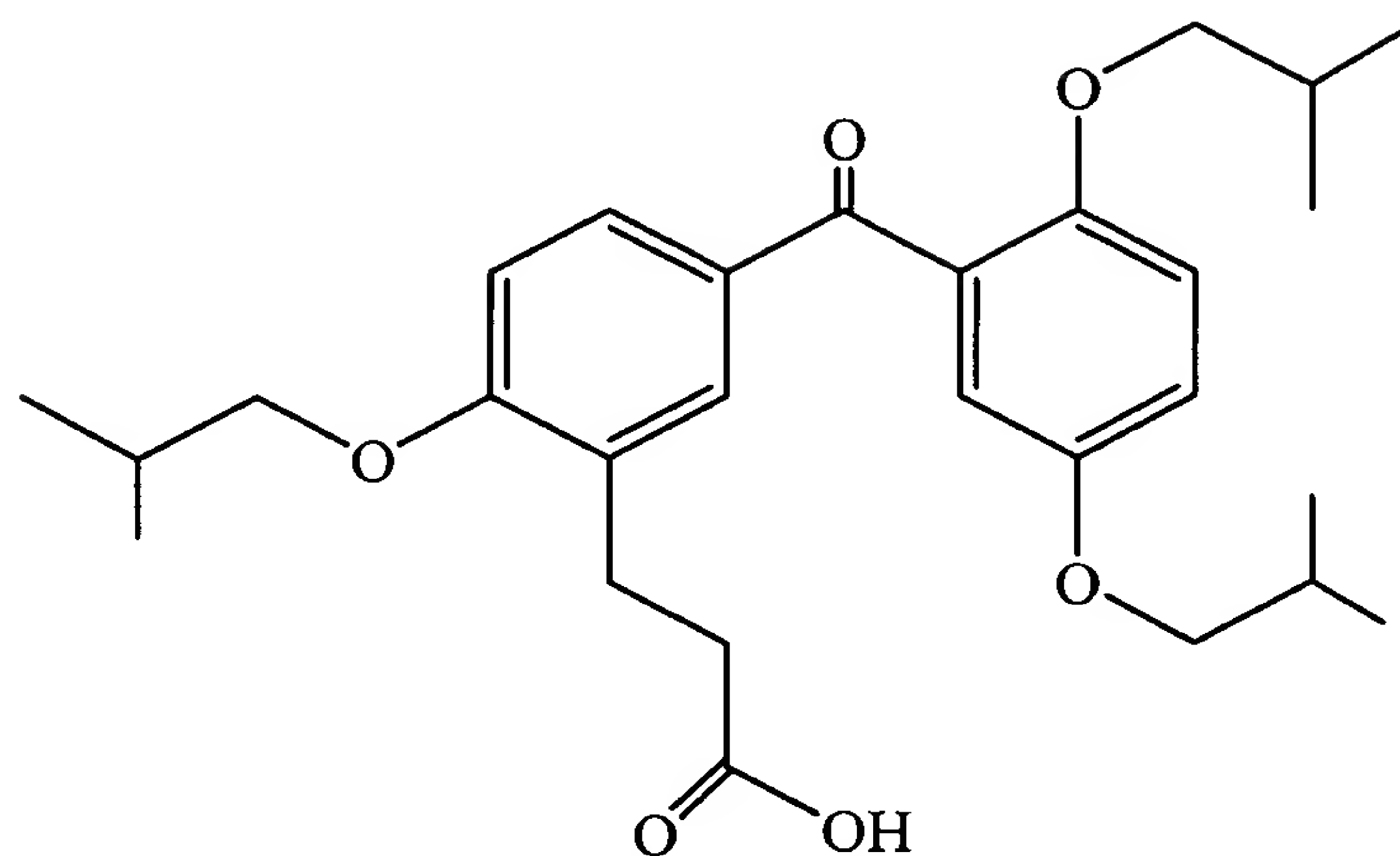
Claim 40. (Currently Amended) ~~An AP-1 inhibitor~~ A composition comprising [[a]] the compound or a salt thereof according to Claim 9 in an amount sufficient to inhibit AP-1 activity.

Claim 41. (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative according to Claim 9, having the following formula:

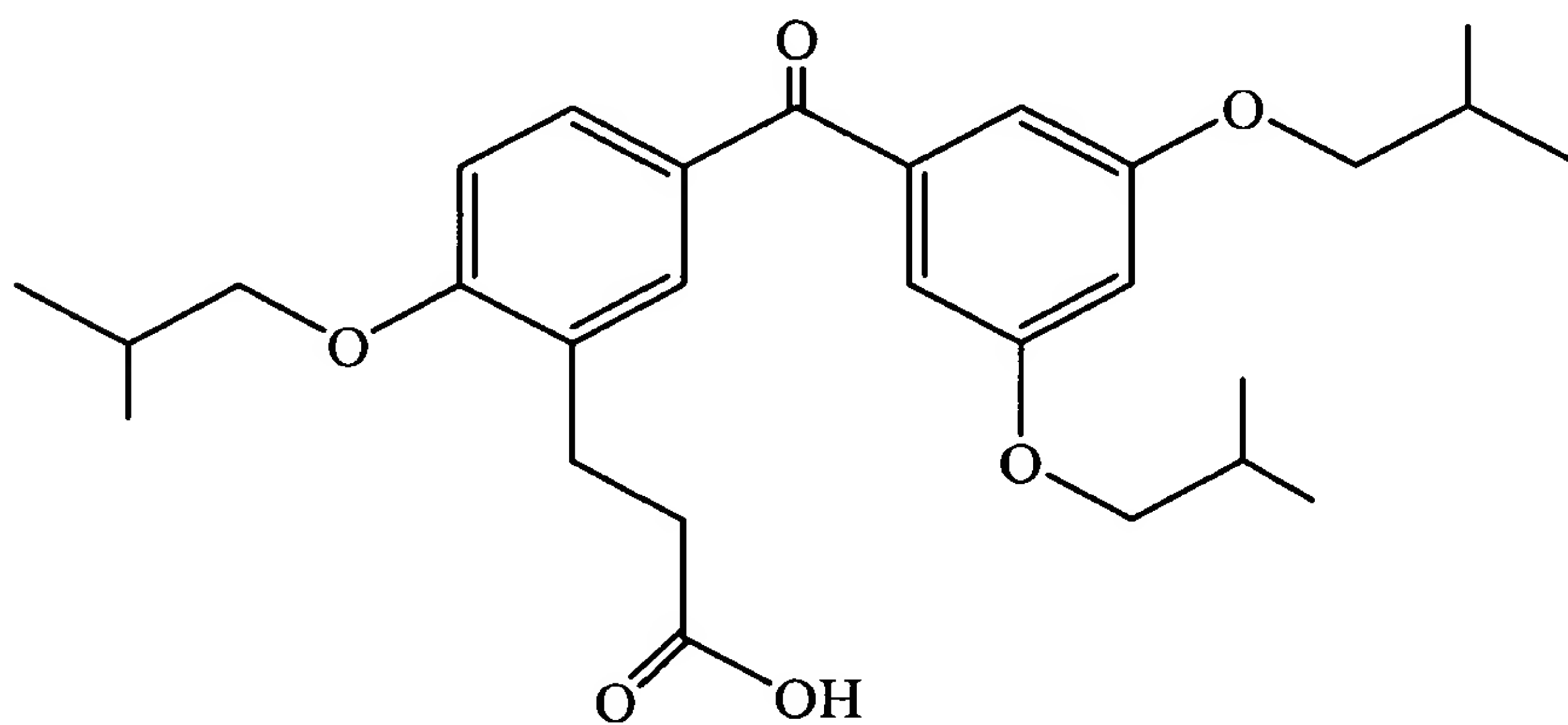


Claims 42-44 (Canceled)

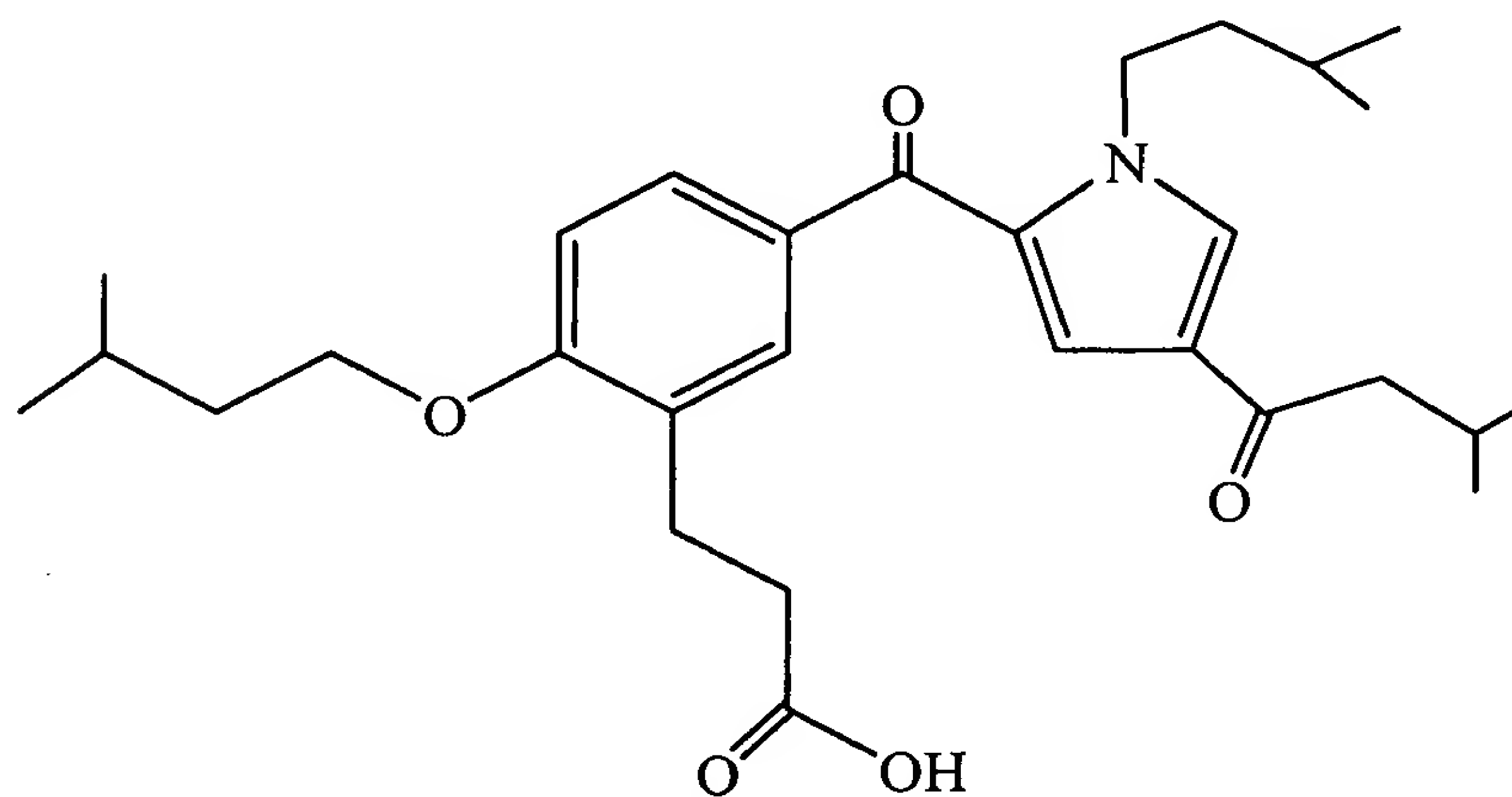
Claim 45. (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative according to Claim 18, having the formula:



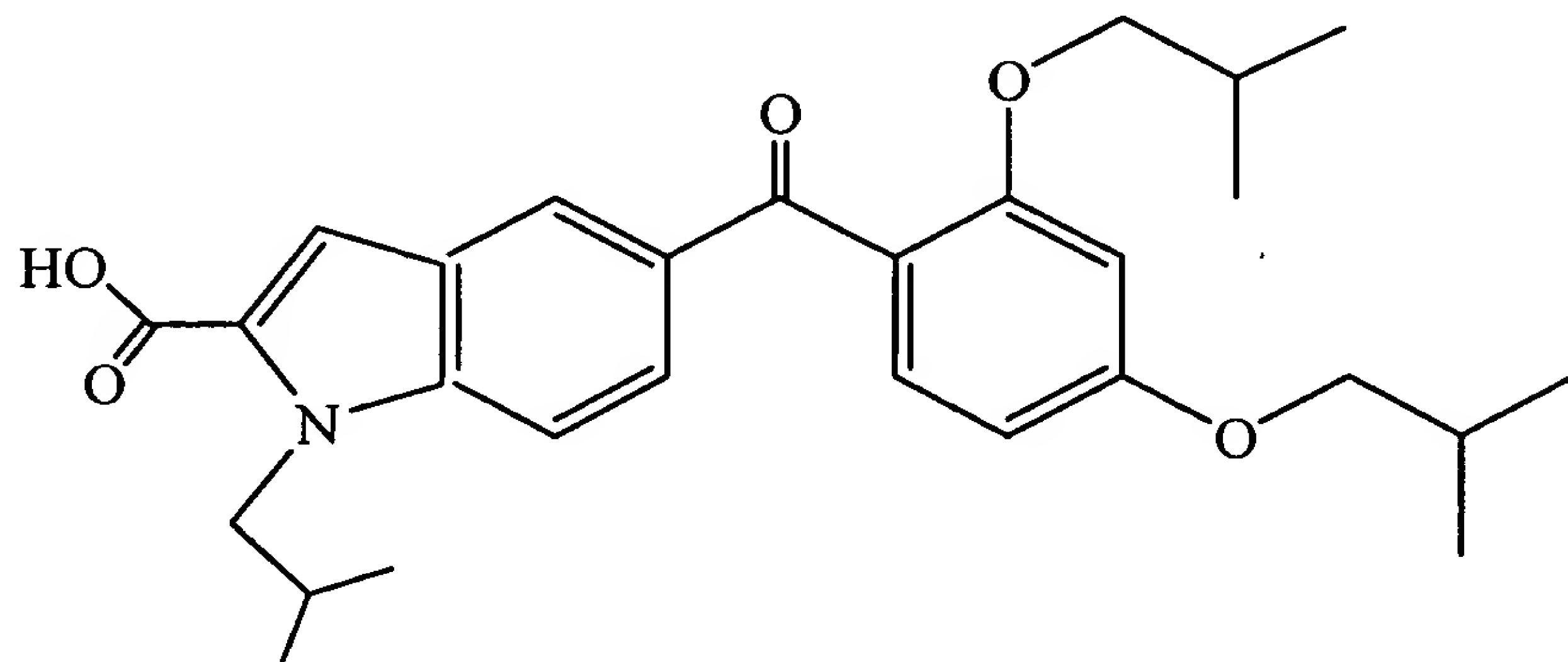
Claim 46 (Previously Presented) The benzene derivative according to Claim 20,
having the formula:



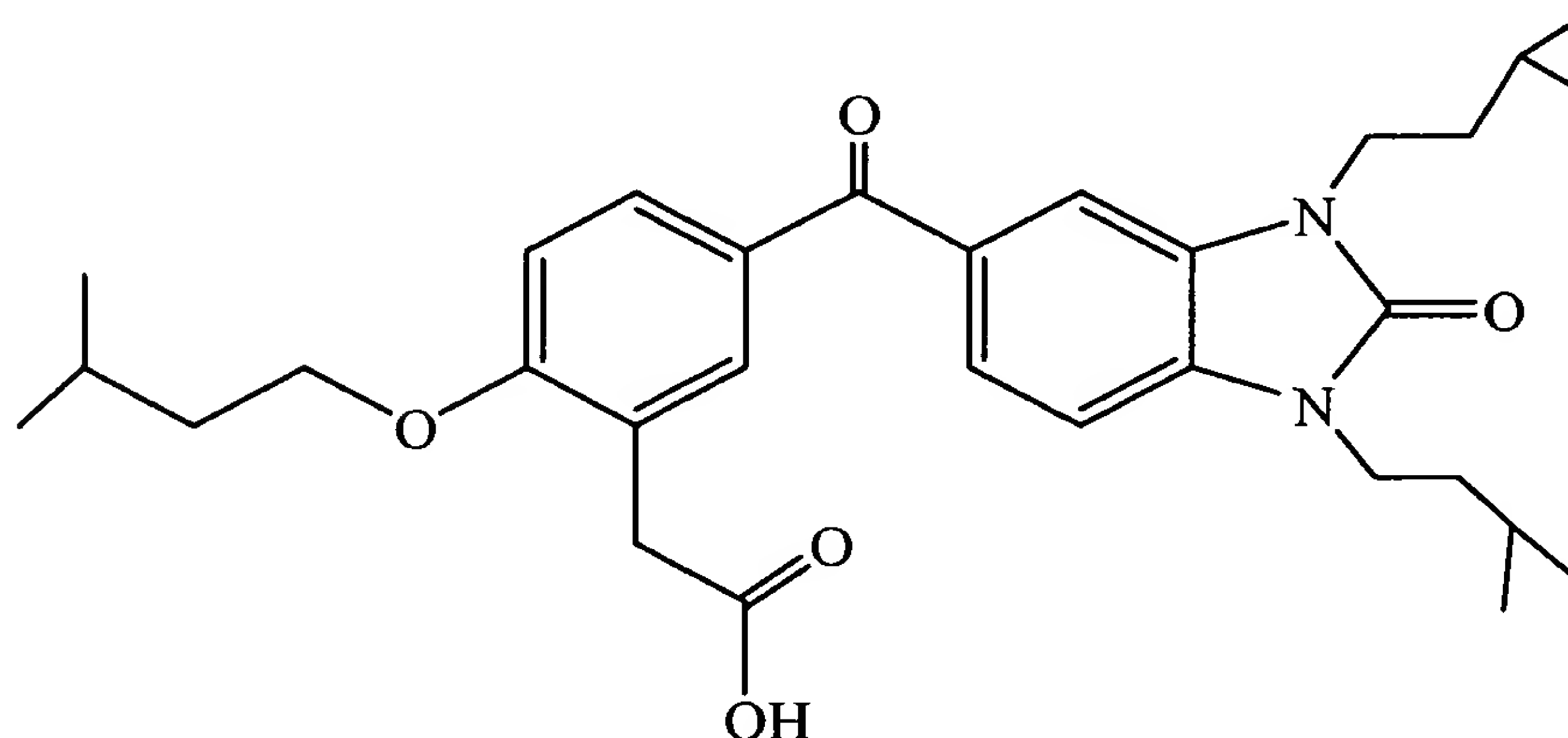
Claim 47 (Withdrawn) The benzene derivative according to Claim 22, having the
formula:



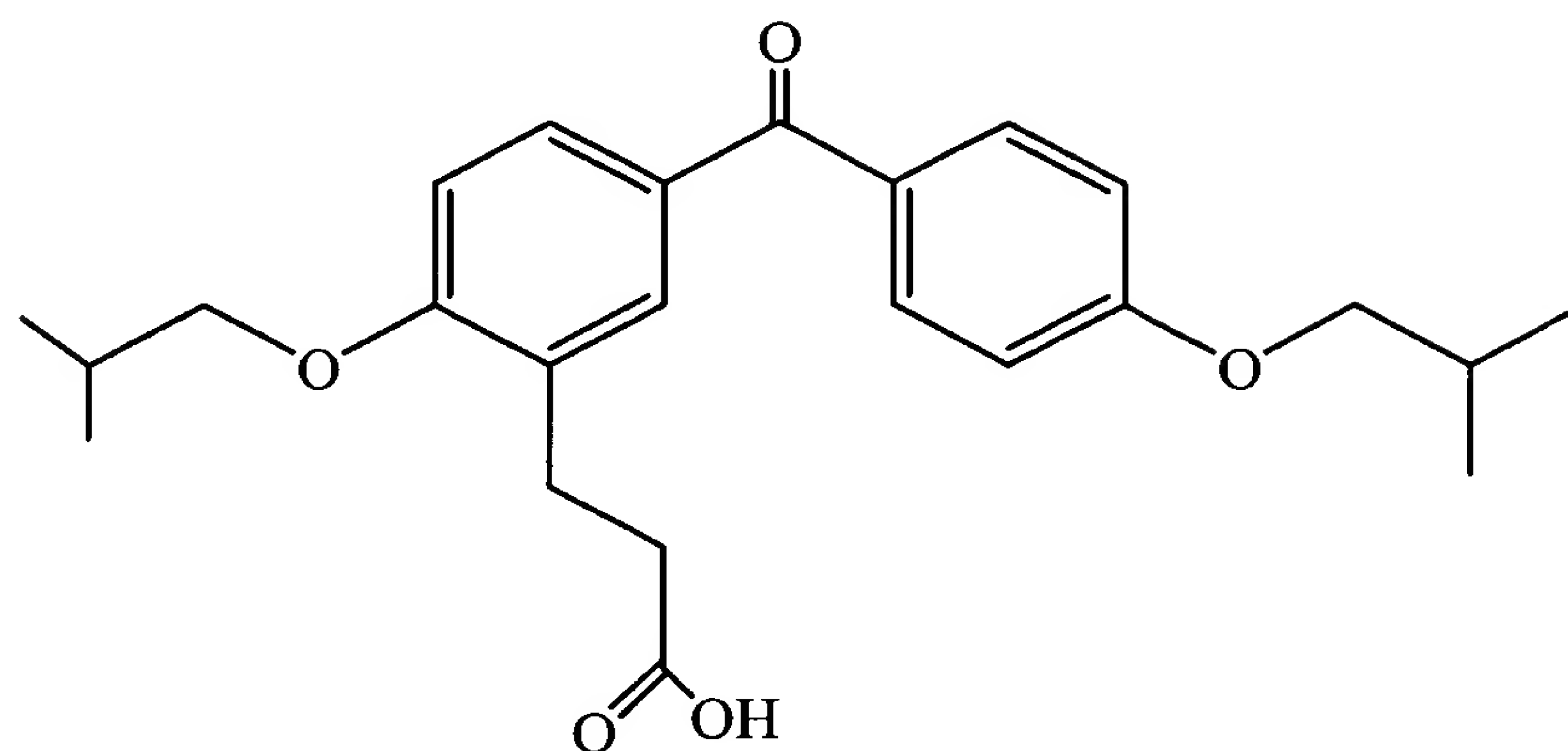
Claim 48. (Withdrawn) The benzene derivative according to Claim 24, having the formula:



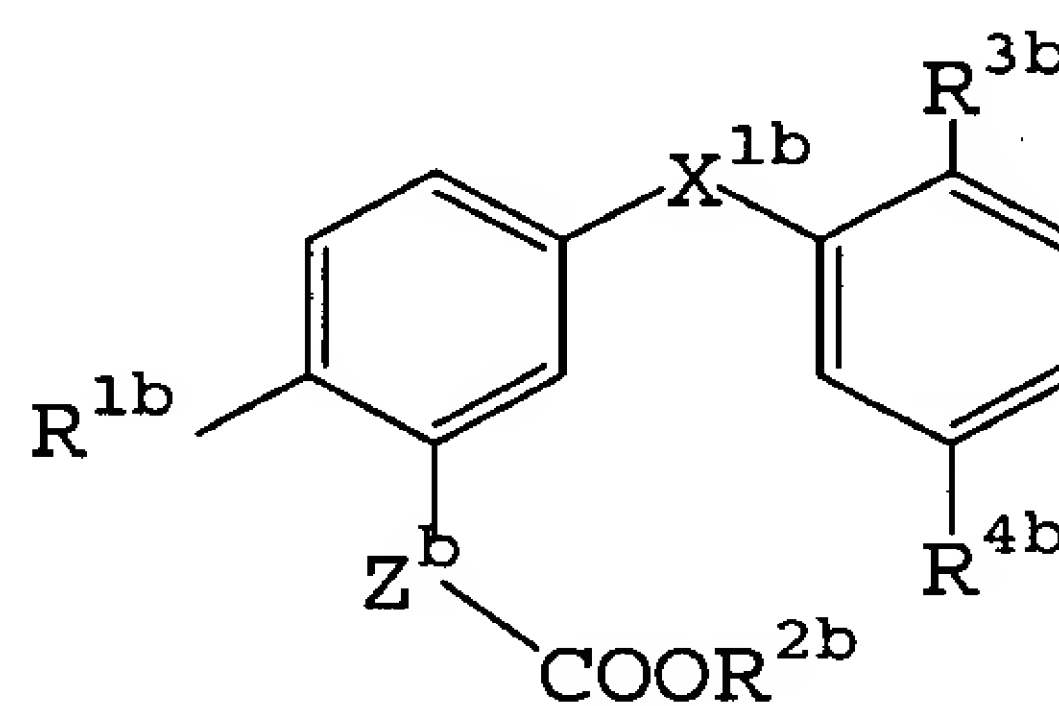
Claim 49. (Withdrawn) The benzene derivative according to Claim 26, having the formula:



Claim 50. (Previously Presented) The benzene derivative according to Claim 28, having the formula:



Claim 51. (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:

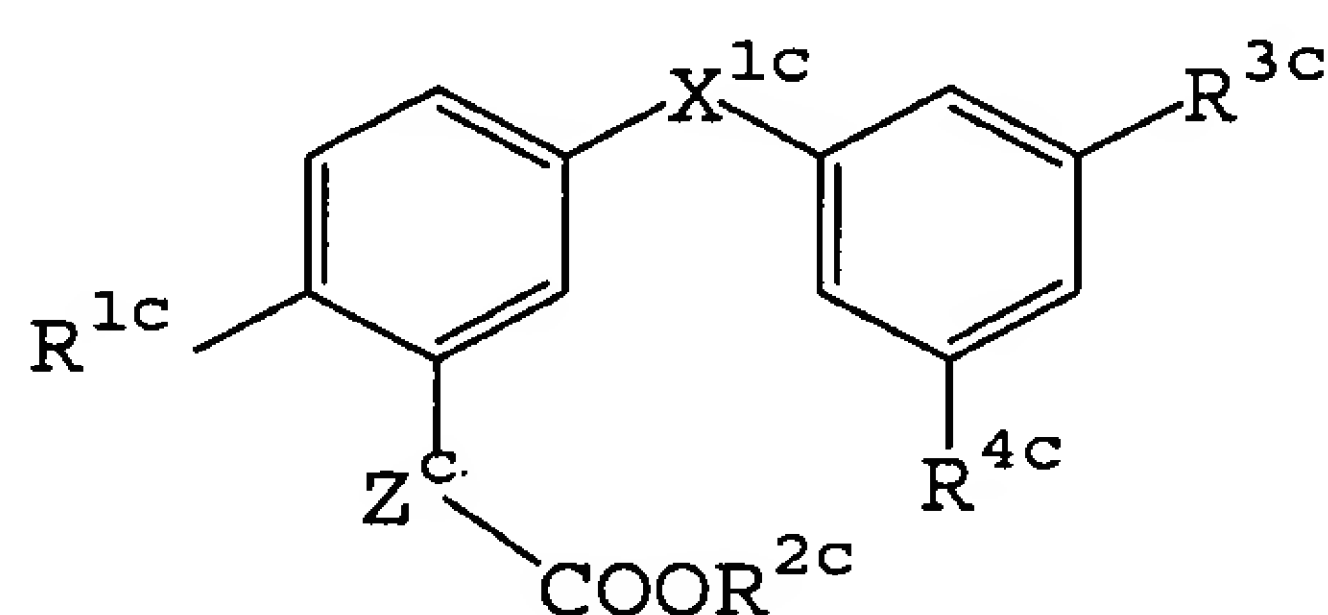


wherein R^{1b} represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, a protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{2b} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3b} and R^{4b} may be the same or different represent a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^{1b}

represents -C(O)-, -CH(OH)- or -CH₂-; and Z^b represents -(CH₂)_{n^b}- (n^b represents 0, 1 or 2 or 3) or -CH=CH-;

or a salt thereof.

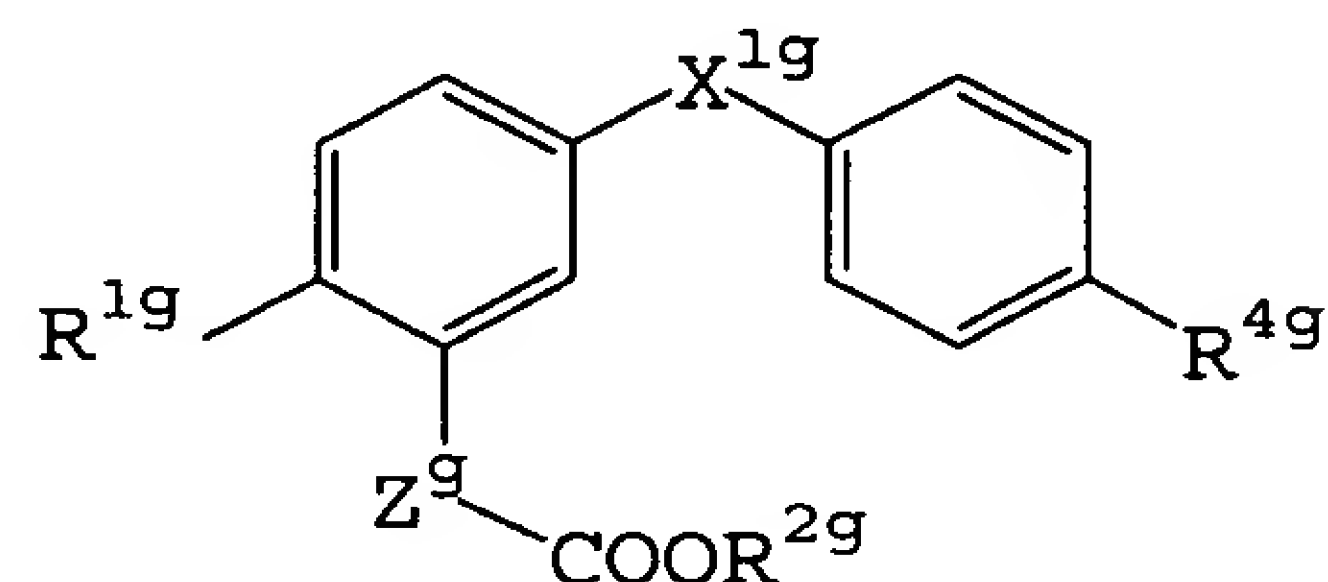
Claim 52. (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{1c} represents a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, a protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; R^{2c} represents a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group; R^{3c} and R^{4c} may be the same or different represent a halogen atom, a cyano group, a nitro group, an unprotected or protected carboxyl group, an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group, an unprotected or protected amino group, a mercapto group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkoxy, aryloxy, acyl, alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, carbamoyl, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylamino, acylamino, alkylsulfonylamino, arylsulfonylamino or heterocyclic group; X^{1c} represents -C(O)-, -CH(OH)- or -CH₂-; and Z^c represents -(CH₂)_{n^c}- (n^c represents 2 or 3) or -CH=CH-;

or a salt thereof.

Claim 53. (Previously Presented) A benzene derivative represented by the following formula:



wherein R^{1g} is a protected hydroxyl group and R^{4g} an unprotected or protected hydroxyl group or an unsubstituted or substituted alkoxy group; X^{1g} is $-C(O)-$, $-CH(OH)-$ or $-CH_2-$; Z^g is $-(CH_2)_n^g-$ (n^g represents 2 or 3); and R^{2g} is a hydrogen atom or a protecting group for carboxyl group;

or a salt thereof.